



*State of New Jersey*

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES**

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JAMES E. MCGREEVEY  
*Governor*

**[www.state.nj.us/health](http://www.state.nj.us/health)**

CLIFTON R. LACY, M.D.  
*Commissioner*

September 9, 2004

Dear Health Care Practitioner:

Re: Universal Respiratory Precautions (URP) in Nursing Homes

As we prepare for the upcoming flu season, it is important to emphasize the need for universal respiratory precautions for both health care providers and consumers. For health care providers, we are continuing the URP awareness campaign begun last year. You will recall that these main precautions are:

- Cover the nose and mouth with a tissue or your upper sleeve when coughing or sneezing;
- Use tissues to contain respiratory secretions, with prompt disposal in nearest waste receptacle;
- Use proper hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions or contaminated objects and materials;
- Provide masks to persons who are coughing, as well as those who come into close contact with them.

For further information on universal respiratory precautions please consult the DHSS website:  
<http://www.state.nj.us/health/er/sarsplan021804.pdf>

As a health care practitioner, you serve as an important part of the effort to prevent the spread of respiratory infection. Furthermore, the example you set for universal respiratory precautions is important for colleagues, staff and nursing home residents. To support greater awareness of and participation in these precautions, we enclose for your distribution posters and URP lapel pins to serve as visible reminders of these precautions.

If you have any questions about URP, please contact Sylvia Bookbinder of the NJDHSS Communicable Disease Service Program at (609) 588-7500. Your cooperation and efforts are appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Susan Reinhard, R.N., Ph.D.  
Deputy Commissioner  
Senior Services

Eddy A. Bresnitz, M.D., M.S.  
State Epidemiologist  
Senior Assistant Commissioner

Enclosures

c: Clifton R. Lacy, M.D.  
James S. Blumenstock